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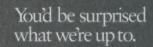
Beethoven's Eroica and Emperor



Cover Photos: Michael Lutch

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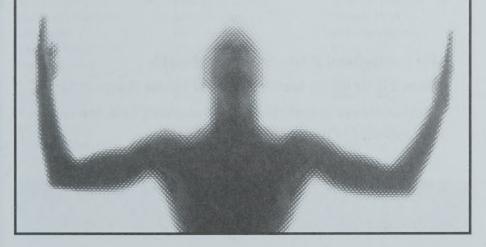
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Program 2003-2004 Season

Friday, March 26, 8.00pm Sunday, March 28, 3.00pm

Grant Llewellyn, conductor

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat Major, "Emperor"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro

Adagio un poco moto

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Kristian Bezuidenhout, fortepiano

-INTERMISSION-

Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat Major, "Eroica"

Beethoven

Allegro con brio Marcia funebre: Adagio assai Scherzo: Allegro vivace Finale: Allegro molto

These performances are dedicated to Karen and George Levy, in grateful appreciation for their years of extraordinary support and friendship.

The program runs for approximately two hours.

The audience is respectfully asked to turn off all electronic watches, paging devices, and cellular phones during the performance.

The Handel and Haydn Society is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

The Handel and Haydn Society wishes to acknowledge WCRB 102.5 FM and Boston Magazine, media sponsors for this program.

Eroica and Emperor

Beethoven began work on his third symphony at a time of crisis, both personal and national. At the age of 28, he was incurably losing his hearing, and felt increasingly cut off from the world of sound that had been his artistic environment. In an impassioned letter, now

NOTES IN BRIEF

Written in 1803-4, Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony marked a decisive change in the composer's artistic development: in many ways, it inaugurates the nineteenth century. The musical forces he was grappling with need plenty of room to work themselves out, and so this great work is longer than any symphony that had been written before. The first movement is heroic indeed, with a tremendous development section and a large-scale final coda; what follows is a profound funeral march, and then a scherzo of equally large proportions. The work ends in perhaps the most remarkable movement of all, a set of variations in sonata form that gradually builds up a theme, then examines it from all musical angles.

Five years later, Beethoven embarked on another grand work in E-Flat, this one a piano concerto. In earlier concertos, he had explored various strategies of contrasting the soloist with the orchestra; his fourth concerto even starts with the piano by itself. In his "Emperor" Concerto, the piano declares its equality with the orchestra from the very beginning, in a series of spectacular cadenzas on the three basic chords of classical harmony. The piano continues its transcendent commentary on the orchestra's material throughout the first and the mysterious second movement; the work ends with a brilliantly athletic rondo.

known as the "Heiligenstadt Testament," he lays bare his anguish:"I would have ended my life—it was only my *art* that held me back." For Beethoven, the only way through his suffering was by triumphing over it in his art. Ironically, the period in which he wrote this agonized document was also one of his most creative times, as his surviving sketchbooks testify.

Around this time, he had been asked by a choreographer named Viganò to create a ballet about Prometheus, who brings the gift of fire and knowledge to mankind, and suffers terribly for his actions. In the ballet version, Prometheus dies and is brought back to life. The ballet ends with a tremendous apotheosis of the hero, celebrated by the creatures he has ennobled. Though littleknown today, "The Creatures of Prometheus" was one of Beethoven's first public successes, and the theme clearly spoke strongly to him. Beethoven began to explore the melody he had used for the final apotheosis, a happy and straightforward "English dance" from a suite of contredanses, first in a set of piano variations, and then in a huge variation-finale for his new symphony. He told his publisher that his piano variations "are worked out in guite a new manner" - and indeed these "Eroica Variations," as well as the Third Symphony which followed, marked a watershed in his compositional style. It would also prove to be a turning-point in the history of classical music.

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Perhaps the first thing to point out about Beethoven's "Eroica" is simply its unprecedented size: its first movement alone is longer than the usual length of an entire Haydn symphony. Beethoven himself had his doubts about what he was asking his audience to take, and cancelled the repeat of the first movement's exposition; he soon restored it. This first Allegro is an overwhelming journey of transformation. We enter the movement through two massive pillars of E-Flat major (a late addition, to balance its decisive final chords). Suddenly, we find ourselves in the midst of the action: the principal theme is immediately

introduced, a triadic horn-call that moves mysteriously downwards at its end. This chromatic alteration is one of the things that must get worked out in this huge movement. Another is the harsh syncopations that mark the climax of the opening exposition.

These issues are worked out in a huge development of 245 bars, in which the various themes are taken apart and examined until nothing is left but violent, overwhelming syncopations, creating one of the most memorable musical crises ever written. In its wake, a new theme is introduced in the remote key of E Minor. The rest of the development is concerned with working out this theme, and its relation to the original themes. Finally we can sense we're approaching the recapitulation, as the momentum dies away to repeated wind chords and scurrying string figures. In this expectant atmosphere, the second horn comes in – by mistake? So Beethoven's friend Ries thought at the first rehearsal: "Can't the damn horn

Napoleon complex

The composition of both works on this program is marked by the shadow of that remarkably self-made man, Napoleon Bonaparte. Beethoven originally intended his Third Symphony to be called "Bonaparte," out of admiration for the young hero of post-Revolutionary France. Beethoven may have been interested in closer connections with Paris; he even planned a trip there to perform his new "Waldstein" Sonata on the extended Erard piano.

But then came Napoleon's self-coronation as Emperor in 1804. According to his friend Ries, the news threw Beethoven into a fury. "'After all, he is nothing but an ordinary mortal! He will trample all the rights of man underfoot to indulge his ambition, and become a greater tyrant than anyone!' And with these words he tore the title page in half and threw it on the ground." When the grand work was published, it bore the title "Sinfonia Eroica, in celebration of the memory of a great man."

Napoleon was to continue to overshadow Beethoven's life. The French invasion of Vienna in 1806 ensured the massive failure of his opera *Leonora*, which closed after only three performances. In May of 1809, Napoleon invaded Vienna again, with an intense bombardment that lasted several days. During the bombing, Beethoven cowered in the cellar, clutching pillows over his ears to save what was left of his hearing. At the time, he was hard at work on his fifth piano concerto. This is now known as the "Emperor," although that is a later title; perhaps its martial rhythms owe something to the military campaigns sweeping across Europe at the time.

player count?" Beethoven was furious that his carefully-staged coup was mis-read. In fact, this "false" entry precipitates the real recapitulation, and now the first horn is given the theme, for the first time in its full glory.

The surprises are not over in this movement, however, for Beethoven creates a coda as long as the opening exposition. Here the mysterious theme from the development gets finally resolved into the home key of E-Flat Major. The opening theme gets worked over more fully, until we have a final triumphant version of the theme which cadences now in E-Flat. The movement sweeps to a close with two decisive chords.

If the first movement is all about the stirring struggles of our nameless hero, the second movement seems to suggest that he didn't win: it's a mysterious funeral march, with the strings imitating the muffled roll of drums. This was a genre that Beethoven had already explored with his Op. 26 piano sonata, as well as in his Op. 35 variations. This time, Beethoven expands the form with contrasting episodes, including a triumphant middle episode in C major, with full scoring of trumpets and drums. This middle episode leads back to what seems at first like the repeat of the opening music. This time, though, the texture opens up into an increasingly charged double fugue. The movement closes with a broken, despairing version of the theme.

After the shattering tragedy of the *Marcia funebre*, the high spirits of the *Scherzo* posed a problem to many 19th century commentators, who couldn't understand how this could fit into their program: some even recommended switching the second and third movements around. Starting from pianissimo, we are presented with a perky tune in the oboe, possibly a quotation of a popular soldier's song; certainly this movement is a celebration, and may suggest the coming back to life of our hero. Its trio uses the full splendor of the three horns for the first time, in a rousing gesture of heroism.

This was the first concerto which Beethoven, on account of his complete deafness, was not able to perform himself.

The finale of this work is the most unusual thing about the whole symphony. Neither a set of variations nor a sonata-form, it is both of these things, and several others as well. After a dramatic operatic call to attention, it opens not with the theme, but with its bass-line, full of grotesque humor in its silences: we then witness the creation of the theme, as with the creation of Prometheus' creatures. After its first tentative steps, we hear a

Pushed to the limits

This program's concerto gives us a rare opportunity to hear the conversation between orchestra and piano in the terms Beethoven conceived it: not only with the incisive, athletic sound of a period orchestra, but with the very different sonorities of a period piano. The instrument onstage is a copy of a typical instrument by the early 19th century Viennese maker Conrad Graf, and represents the final flowering of the wooden-framed piano before the adoption of the iron frame. It was built in 2002 by R. J. Regier; its range is 6 1/2 octaves, almost all of which is required in this concerto. Beethoven was always passionately interested in the piano's development during his career, and his music consistently pushes at the instrument's limits. The sense of working at the very edges of the possible is part of the excitement of hearing this work on a historically-appropriate instrument.



Ludwig van Beethoven

fugal version of one accompaniment for the bassline, then another triplet variation on the bass-line. Finally, the winds present the actual theme, the jovial contredanse that Beethoven used in his ballet. From here, all aspects of this theme are examined, until at the end it returns in a hymnlike version before a final grand coda.

Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto, known as the "Emperor" for its magisterial expansiveness, was composed some five years after his "Eroica." This was the first concerto which Beethoven, on account of his complete deafness, was not able to perform himself. His student Carl Czerny did the honors at the first performance in 1809. The work opens with a declaration of the three building-blocks of Classical harmony: tonic, subdominant, dominant. Each chord is immediately answered by a lavish embellishment from the piano. Beginning a concerto with a series of cadenzas is an unheard-of effect; it also implies that this will be a conversation in which both parties have a great deal to say to each other.

After the orchestra's magisterial opening tutti, the piano enters almost from the sidelines, in a glittering upward scale. The heroic themes that the orchestra has just presented are now recast in a pensive, more inward state. This effect continues throughout the movement, and is nowhere more so than the extreme withdrawal of the soloist before the final recapitulation, as the principal

theme is reduced to its bare rhythmic profile. Beethoven has interwoven the piano and orchestra so closely in this concerto that he asks for no cadenza to close this movement; instead, he provides a written-out solo that soon accommodates comments from the winds and strings, and eventually melts away into the orchestral fabric

The slow movement is cast in the key of B major, with an achingly heartfelt melody. (Its expansive second phrase was later shamelessly quoted by Bernstein in *West Side Story.*) The piano floats down from the top of its range in a rapt pianissimo; in fact, only twice does this movement break its trance with a forte. At the end of this suspended meditation, the two horns slide mysteriously downwards to a B-Flat, and the piano tentatively tries out some new ideas: suddenly, in a bold fortissimo, we are launched into the final *Rondo*, a brilliant display for both soloist and orchestra.

-Robert Mealy

Robert Mealy is the Handel and Haydn Society's Christopher Hogwood Research Fellow for the 2003-2004 season. A scholar and performer, Mr. Mealy has recorded and toured with many period instrument ensembles, including Sequentia, the King's Noyse, Les Arts Florissants, the Boston Camerata and Handel and Haydn. He frequently writes on music, and teaches historical performance at Harvard and Yale.

Grant Llewellyn, conductor



Now in his third season as Music Director of the Handel and Haydn Society, Grant Llewellyn has earned the acclaim of critics and audiences alike, and has established his presence as an engaging and dynamic force in Boston's musical life. Mr. Llewellyn has served as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony, and Principal Conductor of the Royal Flanders Philharmonic. He retains an especially close link

with the BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales where he holds the title of Conductor in Residence. He has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Toronto and engagements include productions with the English National Opera, Spoleto USA, and the St. Louis Opera Theatre. In demand around the globe, this acclaimed musician appears this season with Opera North in Leeds, the Utah Symphony Orchestra, the Southwest German Radio Orchestra (Stuttgart), the Kansas City Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, and in subscription concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 2002 Llewellyn became the subject of a BBC Television documentary aired throughout the

Handel and Haydn Society

Under the leadership of music director Grant Llewellyn and conductor laureate Christopher Hogwood, the Society is a leader in historically informed performance, specializing in music for chorus and orchestra from the Baroque and Classical eras. Each Handel and Haydn concert is distinguished by the use of instruments, techniques, and performance styles typical of the period in which it was composed. Now in its 189th season, the Society has a long tradition of musical excellence, including the American premieres of Handel's Messiah (1818), Haydn's The Creation (1819), and Bach's St. Matthew Passion (1889). Recent

seasons have offered collaborations with prominent jazz artists, a series of semi-staged operas, and programs with dance, including Gluck's *Orfeo* with the Mark Morris Dance Company and, most recently, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, which travels to London in the fall of 2004. Handel and Haydn has been featured nationwide on NPR's acclaimed "SymphonyCast" program and on numerous recordings, such as Sir John Tavener's *Lamentations and Praises* for which it won a 2002 Grammy Award. The organization's Educational Outreach Program brings the joy of classical music to more than 10,000 students each year.

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Kristian Bezuidenhout, fortepiano



Kristian Bezuidenhout is a versatile performer who is equally at home on fortepiano, harpsichord and modern piano and is fast earning a reputation as

one of the most promising musicians of his generation. As a recitalist and chamber musician, Bezuidenhout has appeared in countries as far afield as Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, England, South Africa, and the United States. Notable collaborations have included recitals with Paul O'Dette, Malcom Bilson, and Daniel Hope, as well as performances with Salzburger Hofmusik, The Publick Musick, Le Nuove Musiche, and the Boston Early Music Festival. These concerts mark his debut with the Handel and Haydn Society.

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The Handel and Haydn Society would like to thank Jonathan Del Mar for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of performance material for the Emperor Concerto.

2004-2005 Season Preview

BEHIND-THE-SCENES INTERVIEW WITH GRANT LLEWELLYN



Discover more about these and other wonderful programs in the 2004-2005 season by visiting us at www.handelandhaydn.org.

Listen to Grant Llewellyn's lively descriptions and

Read Robert Mealy's insightful commentary with links to other sources of information.

The season opening program of Mozart and Haydn looks tailor made for the Handel and Haydn Society.

Grant Llewellyn: Indeed, it features a wonderful combination of rousing choruses in the Mozart Mass in C Minor with orchestral accompaniment that is a fantastic stage for our woodwind soloists. It also highlights the Boston debut of the remarkable British soprano, Sally Matthews.

What will Ms. Matthews sing?

GL: Sally performs the aria, *Ave Regina*, a showstopper by Haydn, and, from the Mass in C Minor, the *Et incarnatus est*, one of the most exquisite and sublime solos for the human voice. Sally possesses the warmth, agility, and elegance that are perfect for this music.

Tell us about "Music for a Royal Occasion."

GL: We'll compare and contrast two Baroque orchestral suites for a program of dance music and instrumental fireworks. Handel wrote his *Water Music* for a royal boat ride down the river Thames. Johan Helmich Roman, the "Swedish Handel," worked and performed with Handel in London and composed his

Drottningholmsmusiquen for a royal wedding in Sweden.



Grant Llewellyn leads the Period Orchestra

We offer our 151st annual presentation of Messiah. What makes Handel and Haydn's performances special?

GL: We have a chorus of hand picked soloists who have been singing *Messiah* year-in, year-out, some of them for decades, and yet it doesn't sound the least bit jaded. This is the freshest, bubbliest, liveliest choral singing you'll hear anywhere. And it will be under the direction of our uniquely talented chorusmaster, John Finney.

Handel and Haydn's jazz crossover concerts are among our most popular. Whom have you invited to perform with our orchestra?

GL: We are thrilled to have Boston's very own Gary Burton on vibraphone, and Makoto Ozone on jazz piano. They will perform music from their Grammy nominated CD, *Virtuosi*, featuring everything from Scarlatti to Ravel. They are very faithful to the classical model, but they then go off on all sorts of wonderful jazz tangents. Our orchestra will go off on a few tangents of its own.

What provided the inspiration for the "Classical Valentine" program?

GL: My wife and I love to travel, and I can tell you there's nowhere more romantic than Europe. If you're in Europe, then you must go to London. And if it's Valentine's Day, then you have to go across the channel to Paris. We'll take you to both cities with Haydn's Symphony No. 104, the "London," and Mozart's Symphony No. 31, the "Paris." In between, the great period cellist, Pieter Wispelwey, will serenade us with Haydn's C Major Concerto.

Why music by Brahms for the end of the season?

GL: We had such a big success last year with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony that I decided to expand our programmatic reach to embrace one of the great choral and orchestral masterpieces of all time, Brahms' *German Requiem.* This work exemplifies everything that we strive for. Its musical content is sublime, and its message for mankind is one of peace, hope, and tranquility.

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